MPA WATCH

Overview

Heal the Bay is a non-profit environmental organization with over 15,000 members dedicated to making the Santa Monica Bay and Southern California coastal waters and watersheds safe, healthy, and clean for people and local ecosystems. Heal the Bay is committed to the successful implementation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Southern California through research, monitoring efforts, community collaboration, and education. Since 2008, Heal the Bay has played a critical role in advancing the goals of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) in Southern California. Due in large part to its far-reaching public education campaigns, technical expertise, rapport with policymakers, and role in helping design the new MPAs as part of the South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group, Heal the Bay was instrumental in the recent adoption of science-based MPAs in Southern California. Heal the Bay developed Los Angeles' local MPA Watch program in early 2011.

Heal the Bay has trained **100 volunteers** and **20 interns** who completed over **1,200 surveys** since 2011.

MPA Watch: Los Angeles is a citizen science monitoring program that trains volunteers to observe and collect data about coastal and marine resource use inside and outside marine protected areas (MPAs) using standardized protocols and categorizing observed human uses into a set of activities. Heal the Bay's MPA Watch volunteers collect data from both MPAs and outside MPAs, allowing for useful comparisons. Trained MPA Watch citizen scientists can produce accurate and reliable information to help better understand how the public uses coastal areas, and to inform management and monitoring of MPAs. In Los Angeles County, Heal the Bay manages MPA Watch volunteers that survey inside and outside MPAs in Malibu and Palos Verdes.

Goals

1. To help determine how effective MPAs are at meeting their goal of enhancing recreational activities by tracking changes and trends over time.
2. To provide contextual information on human use for interpretation of biological monitoring data.
3. To inform MPA enforcement and management decisions regarding human activity inside MPAs.
4. To train MPA Watch volunteers as effective public educators regarding MPAs.

Methods

MPA Watch volunteers walk along California's beaches and bluffs surveying and recording all offshore and onshore coastal activities within and directly outside Los Angeles area MPAs. Volunteers are trained to recognize different types of activities, using binoculars to view activities offshore, and to record what they see on data sheets. Examples of activities that volunteers record include consumptive activities such as commercial lobster fishing and shore fishing, and non-consumptive activities such as swimming, SCUBA diving, and wildlife watching. Volunteers are trained to use compasses to accurately begin and end their surveys, as well as to identify MPA boundaries. All data that is collected undergo rigorous quality assurance and quality control protocols by coordinating organizations before being accepted and shared.

Study Area

Our study area includes beaches and offshore areas from Nicholas Canyon to Latigo Beach in Malibu, Leo Carillo Beach, and north of Point Vicente to Portuguese Point in Palos Verdes. The study area includes four marine protected areas (MPAs): *Point Dume SMCA, Point Dume SMR, Point Vicente SMCA, and Abalone Cove SMCA.*

MPA WATCH: Los Angeles

In the Classroom...

The first part of MPA Watch training is in the classroom and includes information on the MLPA, MPA regulations and locations, and how to identify consumptive and non-consumptive activities.

In the Field...

A new group of citizen scientists complete their field training at Point Dume, Malibu. During trainings, volunteers learn to identify about 30 consumptive and non-consumptive activities, both onshore and offshore.

One of the consumptive ocean uses MPA Watch citizen scientists record include commercial lobster fishing. This boat is in an area adjacent to Point Vicente State Marine Conservation Area in Palos Verdes.

Some of the consumptive and non-consumptive ocean uses prevalent along a survey on Westward Beach (within Point Dume State Marine Reserve) include shore-based rod/reel fishing, kayaking, swimming, wading, and beach recreation.

For more information about MPA Watch, please contact
mpawatch@healthebay.org

MARINE PROTECTED AREA
COLLABORATIVE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT

*Facilitating the evolution of locally based, multi-member stewardship councils
for cost-effective, transparent, on the ground implementation
of California's Marine Protected Areas.*

The main goal of the MPA Collaborative Implementation Project is to provide local communities with the information, structure, support, and inter-agency communication to facilitate the creation of working Marine Protected Area (MPA) collaborative groups that are uniquely suited to each respective county's needs.

County-based collaboratives are beneficial to participating agencies and general MPA implementation by:

- Creating county-wide consistency in outreach messaging, educational guidelines, and enforcement protocols, reviewed and approved by DFW.

- Streamlining communication procedures with the managing agency (DFW) as well as local partners by providing main points of contact.

- Creating a public-private partnership that can leverage existing resources while identifying collaborative funding opportunities for implementation projects.

- Informing the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) about existing programs, resources, and activities operating locally within MPAs.

- Educating (DFW) about the unique issues facing implementation of the local MPAs in the county and identifying a form of partnership that best meets the goals of the Marine Life Protection Act while adhering to each organizations respective mission statement.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife encourages their local MPA implementation partners to develop educational guidelines specific to their location and visitor base. The Department will support local agencies in the development of behavioral protocols by providing science background and general recommendations. In general, the Department promotes protocols and educational guidelines that minimize impacts to the resources while providing for the public's enjoyment of those resources, within the confines of existing laws and regulations.

DFW General Questions: AskMPA@wildlife.ca.gov

Community Partnership Questions: calla.allison@resources.ca.gov

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM:

Community Partnerships, or "Collaboratives," provide a localized, comprehensive approach to MPA implementation by bringing together local experts and authorities in the areas of:

1. education and outreach, 2. enforcement, and 3. research and monitoring.

1. **Outreach and Education** – main objective is to create a communication hub so that outreach projects can be vetted and approved both locally and by the managing agency (DFW). Statewide goal is to maintain a consistent look and feel for MPA outreach materials while adhering to the local guidelines of the agency with jurisdictional authority over installation/distribution site. Secondary objective is to establish mutually agreed upon local guidelines and protocols for MPA education and outreach.

2. **Enforcement** – main objective is to conduct county wide MPA enforcement trainings for all law enforcement personnel who regularly patrol in or adjacent to MPAs and to engage District Attorneys and/or City Attorney's Offices in such trainings. Trainings are co-hosted with DFW. Secondary objective is to create a local enforcement response plan for immediate response for MPA violations.

3. **Research and Monitoring** – main objective is to create a forum for MPA science to be communicated to local managers and non-profit groups engaged in outreach activities. Secondary objective is to create a county-wide data base of all historical and current research and monitoring occurring in local MPAs. Data will be shared with the Monitoring Enterprise and used to inform local agencies of authority of approved Scientific Collection Permits.